

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A holder for a scouring device comprising:

- a) a base;
- b) a pair of opposed flexible legs extending from the base and being movable toward each other by the application of pressure by a user, each opposed flexible leg comprising a central portion and an end portion; and
- c) a gripping assembly positioned at the end portion of each of the opposed flexible legs and including a gripping means comprising a finger guard having an upper surface for placement of the fingers of the user and a lower surface, a plurality of spaced apart grippers extending away from the lower surface movable in unison from a first position by the application of pressure by the fingers of the user to the pair of opposed flexible legs sufficient to enter the scouring device at the same time to secure the holder to the scouring device wherein the scouring device is held by the holder without the application of pressure by the user, to a second position wherein the user maintains pressure on the holder to release the grippers at the same time from the scouring device without the user having to touch the scouring device during movement from the first position to the second position.

Claim 2 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the gripping means comprises a plurality of spaced apart teeth.

Claim 3 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the gripping means comprises a plurality of hooks.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The holder of claim 1 wherein the base, the opposed flexible legs and the gripping assembly have a unitary construction.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The holder of claim 1 wherein the central portion of the opposed flexible legs comprises a gripping section wherein one of said opposed flexible legs is engaged by a user's thumb and the other of said opposed flexible legs is engaged by at least one finger of the same hand as the user's thumb.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The holder of claim 5 wherein the opposed flexible legs extend toward each other at the central portion.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The holder of claim 6 wherein the opposed flexible legs extend away from each other at the end portions thereof.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The holder of claim 7 wherein the ~~gripping means comprises a~~ finger guard ~~extending~~ extends in a plane substantially horizontally to an upper surface of the holder ~~and a scouring device engaging portion extending from beneath the finger guard downwardly to thereby enter into and grippingly engage the scouring device.~~

Claim 9 (canceled).

Claim 10 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the base lies in a plane substantially parallel to an upper surface of the scouring device.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The holder of claim 1 wherein the central portion of the opposed flexible legs has an uneven surface to facilitate operative engagement of the holder by the user.

Claim 12 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the holder is made from at least one flexible material selected from the group consisting of plastic, metal and rubber.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A method of gripping a scouring device comprising:

- 1) placing the scouring device in contact with a holder comprising:
 - a) a base;
 - b) a pair of opposed flexible legs extending from the base and being movable toward each other by the application of pressure by a user, each opposed flexible leg comprising a central portion and an end portion; and
 - c) a gripping assembly positioned at the end portion of each of the opposed flexible legs and including a gripping means comprising a finger

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guard having an upper surface for placement of the fingers of the user and a lower surface, a plurality of spaced apart grippers extending away from the lower surface movable in unison from a first position by the application of pressure by the fingers of the user to the pair of opposed flexible legs sufficient to secure the holder to the scouring device wherein the scouring device is held by the holder without the application of pressure by the user to a second position wherein the user maintains pressure on the holder to release the grippers at the same time from the scouring device without the user having to touch the scouring device during movement from the first position to the second position to release the scouring device,

2) applying pressure to the opposed flexible legs at said central portion to bring the opposed flexible legs closer together, and

3) releasing the pressure on the opposed flexible legs to thereby enable the gripping means to move to said first position to secure the holder to the scouring device.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method of claim 13 further comprising:

applying pressure to the opposed flexible legs at said central portion to bring the opposed flexible legs closer together a sufficient distance so that the gripping means moves to the second position thereby releasing the scouring device from the holder.